

Reckless Ralph's

DIME NOVEL ROUNDUP

Official Organ-Happy Hours Brotherhood.

DIME NOVELS AT LAST RECOGNIZED IN HIGH
PLACES (By W.M.Burns.)

I just read an Associated Press article that appeared in various newspapers throughout the country. Thinking the article to be of interest to dime novel fans and collectors, I am going to quote it verbatim. The headline reads: "DEADWOOD DICK WINS PLACE WITH HIGHBROWS IN LIBRARY." (Now for the article itself). "Washington D.C. Jan. 8.

Deadwood Dick of dime novel fame has just made his proudest redskin "leap in the air and bite the dust", and may the kindly shades keep him from knowing it was his charm and not his bullets that did the deed. He is being installed with all his yellow-back pals and gals on the sacred shelves of the rare book room in the Library of Congress. Just one generation ago he saw his devotees tracking the trail to the woodshed, followed by an irate father grasping the family switch.

Dick and his pals fared forth offering their adventures for a nickel or a dime, and like everything that comes too easily to humans, he was thrown away so carelessly that he has almost disappeared from the American scene, so, he has become rare.

Startled historians discovered the dime novels hold much that is authentic about pioneer days. The Library of Congress began to want Deadwood Dick and his pals. But Dick has become an expensive gentleman in recent years. Then the files of the copyright de-

partment had to be renovated for removal into the new archives building, just being finished.

M. Valta Parma, director of the rare book room decided to explore, and there he found Dick. Scooping up the dusty yellow books, he saved them from a "fate worse than death"-the ignoring of a furnace.

The dime novel, Parma explains, made its debut under the sponsorship of Erastus Beadle of New York in 1859." (NOTE: The Sept.-Oct. 1933 issue of the American Book Collector, contained an article by Mr. Ralph Admari, titled "Ballou, the Father of the Dime Novel," in which Mr. Admari claims that Maturin Murry Ballou, and not Erastus Beadle, was the first to sponsor and publish dime novels, starting as early as 1845. Incidentally, Mr. Admari is a recognized authority on dime novels.) Now, continuing the article, we read:

"But somehow, parents thought their children should be reading Shakespeare or Emerson. Deadwood Dick and his energetic gal "Calamity Jane" had to sneak into the house, Certainly the dime novel could not be criticized on the grounds of morality. The dime novel girls did not even stretch their legs; they "eased their limbs." They remained true to their own true lovers and always were properly clothed... And now, "Buffalo Billy, the Boy Bulwhacker" resides in the same building with the dignified Othello. Now gray-haired men can revive the dear dead days by walking unashamed thru the majestic portals of the Library of Congress, demanding the little yellowback with the magnificent boast that reads; "I'm Mustang Sam, the High Hunk-a-huck of E. Pluribus Unum. I can yell louder; run furdur; ride faster; shoot straighter; jump higher; tell bigger lies; and jump outside more chained lightning, than any other two-

legged critter, as was ever born."

So there you have the article boys, just as it appeared in the newspapers. My most humble apologies to the unknown writer of the article. In the words of a prominent novel collector, I have been "stealing his thunder." But, if this article reaches his eyes, I feel sure that he will forgive me for wanting to bring it to the attention of the numerous members of the Happy Hours Brotherhood, and novel collectors in general, who possible would not see it otherwise than thru this medium. In conclusion I want to say that it is a fact that verious public libraries and museums throughout the country are eagerly seeking early dime novels to add to their collection of Americana. The rare book collector is after them, too, which all goes to show that we have formidable rivals in this novel-collecting game. This of course greatly enhances the value of our own collections. Now, a word of advice; Don't under-estimate the value of your novels, in selling or trading.. Don't sell at a sacrifice if it possibly can be avoided. The value of dime novels never decreases, but is constantly increasing, and fast. A good collection in only a very few years from now, will be worth a veritable gold mine.

DIME NOVEL WRITER'S MISSING MONEY.

A strange treasure hunt will be carried out by Dr. Elmer Hoffman of Sharon, Wis., with the special permission of the Chicago Probate Court.. His brother was John M. Hoffman, writer of famous dime novels of a past generation, who died an old man in 1928, leaving, it was beleived, a sizable fortune. For years he received a substantial income from the sale of his "Slashaway, the Fearless" - "The Mad Avenger" - "Gunpowder Jim" and other books

of the type which boys of his day read behind the barn, or in other retired spots where parental eyes would not discover their deviltry.

It was known, Dr. Hoffman told the court, that the author, having a dislike for banks and bankers, carried his money about with him, or hid it.. At times, it was stated, he had as much as \$40,000. in cash on his person. His wife, whose death preceded his, left him a fortune in jewels, but when, after his death, a perfunctory search was made of the home, only \$35.00 was discovered.

Now, the brother and heir, after five years, will conduct a careful hunt for the money and jewels. One wonders why he waited. For all we know, others may not have been so dilatory. If there was suspicion that the old house contained such a horde, it is a wonder it wasn't pulled to pieces. Apparently it is still intact. Perhaps by the time the legalized search is completed, the underpinning will still be left.

SINCLAIR TOUSEY-Chapter 3-(Conclusion)

In 1840 he returned to the state of New York and engaged in farming. He followed this in connection with other business for several years. In 1853, he sold his farm with the view of going to the West for the purpose of farming. While visiting New York, he was turned from this design by a proposition to enter a firm doing business as general news agents, The firm of Ross, Jones & Tousey was then formed. This afterward became Ross & Tousey by the withdrawal of Mr. Jones; and then Sinclair Tousey, by the retirement of Mr. Ross. Both of these gentlemen received full compensation for their share in the business.

In about seven years Mr. Tousey enlarged the business from one hundred fifty, to

two hundred thousand dollars per annum, to over a million. During this whole period he came to the store in Nassau Street between three and four in the morning, summer and winter, and remained until late in the afternoon. He watched every department with his own eyes, and by his untiring energy and example, gave to all the persons employed, by his own zeal.

The firm became the general agents for some of the most prominent publications. There were a number of houses in the news business and the rivalry was very strong between them. At length a plan was arranged for uniting into an incorporated company of several of these firms, which has resulted in building one of the most extensive business enterprises in the United States.

The American News Co., commenced business Feb. 1, 1864 with Sinclair Tousey as its president, which he remains to this day. It was formed by the junction of the houses of Sinclair Tousey-H. Dexter and Hamilton & Co., the latter having previously absorbed several lesser firms. The great executive ability and untiring energy of Mr. Tousey soon developed the business to an immense extent. Its dealings are with the news agents, now to be found in every city and village in the land.

By a wonderful system, the vast editions of the daily and weekly papers and magazines are quickly distributed throughout the whole country. In most cases it takes the entire edition (except that sent to subscribers) of the leading weekly papers.

The American Bookseller, published semi-monthly by the American News Co., has a list of over a thousand American & Foreign publications in which it is a dealer. It also publishes and deals in books, and furnishes all kinds of news-dealer and stationer supplies.

In the spring of 1877, the company took possession of a magnificent building which it had erected for its business, at a cost of some \$200,000 for the structure alone. The site is that formerly occupied by Burton's Theater on Chambers Street. In all parts of this vast building, can be seen, the immense and thoroughly systematized business going forward. Next to some of the great libraries it is the place of the greatest collection of printed matter in the city or the nation. There are branch offices in other parts of the city. A large number of persons are employed and the annual sales now amount to several millions.

In February 1867, a second company was formed and there are other companies and dealers. Where the American News Co., is the general agent of a publication, the others buy at its counters. While Mr. Tousey has had able assistance in the management of the affairs of the American News Co., still the business is to be regarded as the outgrowth of the talents and energy for which he is particularly noted. He has seemed a man created for the business and it for him. Where other men would have faltered, he has rushed on, and in all the labors of planning and executing-in looking ahead and then going ahead-he has proven to be "the right man in the right place." As much as he loved the pursuit of agriculture, and tho he would have probably have succeeded in Western farming; it is a fortunate thing for the business enterprise of the country, that he was induced to remain in New York. He is certainly one to whom his friend Horace Greeley never thought it well to advise to "Go West".

Mr. Tousey is a public-spirited citizen and sometimes writes in the press on subjects of practical interest to the community.

He is a member of the Union League Club and is prominent in the Republican Party. He has traveled extensively in Europe. His face very clearly indicates the lifelong character of the man. It is a plain and honest countenance with no want of intelligence or aimibility; but with frankness, decision, and determination as its more prominent indications. His manners are gentlemanly, and tho totally wanting in show or deceit, are marked by both sincerity and self-respect. He is sympathetic and benevolent. Especially, he is the friend and benefactor of those who are seeking advancement in life, by the practice of industry. (The End.)

BARRY ONO in his recent article, pointed out that "Black Bess" ran to 254 penny numbers. "Handsome Harry, the Pride of the Belvidere" began in Golden Hours No. 734 and reached 101 chapters in No. 774, which is the last number I have of Golden Hours, and the story is still "continued in our next."

Hey ! You lovers of Golden Hours stories! Note that Street & Smith began the reprint of "The House of Mystery" by Matt Royal, in the back part of Tip Top Weekly No. 840, and Bob Smeltzer can vouch for it's being a tale to hold your interest from start to finish.

To show you how great an impression some of the old boys books have made on the world we call attention to the name given to a certain stamp-collector's choice—a watermark detector. The name chosen for this particular article is "NICK CARTER". Here's one of the favorites become the brand new name of a new article of merchandise,

(Wm. B. McCaffety, Ft. Worth)

CHARLIE BRAGIN had a nice display of novels in Lightner's Hobby Show (of Hobbies Magazine) out in Chicago last December. The Associated Press gave it a bit of publicity too.

The Boston Advertiser for Feb.18,1934 has a fine write-up and pictures of old-time Beadles Libraries, and others. It is very interesting, too. They also report that an article appeared in American Magazine for March, 1934.

"Why do they speak of mental food? "

"Haven't you ever seen a boy eating up a dime novel? " (Bill Burns)

The work of a lifetime has been spent in getting the Dime Novel Authors from 1860 to 1900; also a list of all known novels and story papers published between 1860 and 1930. It is "just off the press", size 6x9. It took one man and four others, nearly a lifetime to get it together. If you haven't received your copy, you'd better send for it NOW-Price \$1.00 per copy and well worth it.

RALPH F. CUMMINGS--GRAFTON, MASSACHUSETTS.

THIS REPRINT of the Original, produced in Boston, Massachusetts, in February, 1960 for the original publisher.